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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2004

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Erdogan wants Powell as Cyprus mediator - Aksam
Erdogan asks Annan to replace De Soto - Milliyet 1/25
Cyprus will top Erdogan-Bush agenda - Sabah
Greek Cypriots afraid of referendum proposal - Hurriyet
Kerry overtakes Bush in opinion poll - Hurriyet
Kerry leads: Even Saddam couldn't save Bush - Milliyet
Israel warms to Turkey's mediation offer - Milliyet
David Kay: No WMD in Iraq - Sabah 1/2
Cheney: The EU must support Turkey - Hurriyet 1/25

OPINION MAKERS

US happy with NSC statement on Cyprus - Zaman 1/25
Powell urges Athens to press Greek Cypriots - Yeni Safak
Erdogan, Bush to meet for three hours - Cumhuriyet 1/25
Cheney gives the world lessons in brute force - Radikal 1/25
Bush prefers general elections in Iraq in July - Zaman
US State Dept.: 70 percent of Al-Qaeda destroyed - Zaman
1/25
Turkmen return home - Cumhuriyet
Thousands of exiled Turkmen return to Kirkuk - Yeni Safak
US delegation in Libya after 38 years - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

Cyprus: Turkish Cypriot leader Denktas held talks with Prime Minister Erdogan and later with President Ahmet Necdet Sezer in Ankara over the weekend. On Sunday, Sezer and Denktas issued a call for resuming the Cyprus talks. Erdogan called for the appointment of an impartial mediator to help push the negotiations forward, and is expected to urge the US to take up this role. Weekend papers speculate that Secretary Powell, former NATO Secretary General George Robertson, and former US Secretary of State James Baker could be named as a go-between for Cyprus. Denktas, however, opposes the appointment of a new mediator until his role is more clearly defined. Sources 'close to the US government' expect Powell to step in as a mediator, according to some papers. If the Greek Cypriot side shows a new attitude, the TRNC will not hold back, Erdogan said before leaving for the US on Sunday. Turkey's National Security Council (NSC) had agreed on Friday to back a resumption of UN negotiations in a bid to forge a deal before Cyprus joins the EU on May 1.
PM Erdogan's US visit: Prime Minister Erdogan left for his visit to the United States on Sunday. He was accompanied by 3 cabinet ministers, 165 businessmen and over 50 journalists. Dailies expect the Cyprus issue to top the agenda of meetings between Turkish and US officials. The two sides will ponder the possibilities for expanded cooperation against forces that oppose a peaceful settlement in Cyprus and Turkey's EU membership.

Ankara to mediate between Israel, Syria: The Israeli foreign ministry has responded positively to Ankara's offer to mediate between Israel and Syria in a prospective return to peace talks between the two countries. The Syrians have reportedly welcomed the Turkish approach as well. 'We hope Turkey can persuade the Israeli government to abandon its noncompliance with international law and UNSC resolutions,' Syria's information ministry said. Prime Minister Erdogan

said at the World Economic Forum meetings in Davos on Saturday that Turkey's foreign minister would launch a new diplomatic initiative on the issue soon.

Northern Iraqi refugee camp to be closed: Turkey, the US, and the UN have agreed to close the Mahmur refugee camp in Northern Iraq, an alleged safe haven for PKK/KADEK terrorists, Saturday papers report. The MFA said on Friday that an agreement for the return of the approximately 13,000 Turkish nationals in the camp would be signed once the sides formally approve the deal. Refugees not willing to return to Turkey may continue living in Iraq or move on to third countries.

Moscow slams Ankara for Chechen support: On the eve of Foreign Minister Gul's Russia visit in February, Moscow has voiced its displeasure with Turkish support for Chechen terrorists, weekend papers report. Russia's deputy foreign minister Trubnikov said that Moscow is 'deeply concerned' about support extended to Chechen terrorists by a number of Turkish NGOs.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Turkish PM in Washington

"The White House Agenda includes a Complaint Against Bremer"

Sedat Ergin listed issues for the Turkish PM's Washington trip in the mass appeal Hurriyet (1/26): "The visit and the treatment that Erdogan will be given indicate that the crisis between the two countries has been left behind. In this context, the message from President Bush during the meeting will show Turkey's importance for the US. Cyprus will likely top the agenda. PM Erdogan's Washington trip takes place right after a new Turkish initiative on Cyprus. Washington is pleased with Turkey's diplomatic moves on Cyprus, and Erdogan will seek US support for certain improvements in the Annan Plan. Erdogan might ask Bush to appoint an important American figure as Cyprus mediator. . In Washington Erdogan once again will highlight Turkish concerns about an ethnic federation Kurdish aspirations for autonomy. He is expected to warn the US administration against a change in the demographic structure in Kirkuk. The elimination of the PKK presence in northern Iraq will also be raised. Another thorny issue about Iraq is related with Paul Bremer. Bremer is known for his negative views of Turkey, and he does not always implement agreements reached between Ankara and Washington. Thus PM Erdogan might ask President Bush to warn Bremer. . The US might ask Turkey to open its border with Armenia. The unilateral opening of the border is unlikely as long as the Armenian occupation of Azeri territory continues. Nevertheless, Turkey has softened to a great extent the embargo against Armenia. .Another issue that might come to the agenda is the Turkish request to revive plans for the establishment of qualifying industrial zones."

"The Bush-Erdogan Meeting"

Yasemin Congar noted in the mass appeal Milliyet (1/26): "Given the fact that President Bush has reiterated his will to solve the Cyprus issue, Cyprus will be a top agenda item in his meeting with PM Erdogan. Turkey and the US will shape plans for a multi-dimensional cooperation to eliminate factors which might block the Cyprus breakthrough and Turkey's EU entry. The Bush administration sees the NATO summit in Istanbul in June as a chance to showcase Turkish economic and political reforms and cultural diversity to the EU and the Middle East. . Washington is ready to appoint an American official as Cyprus mediator if given the nod by UNSG Annan. . On Wednesday President Bush might tell the Turkish PM that Secretary of State Colin Powell personally will press for a Cyprus breakthrough, and that the US will begin diplomatic efforts to ensure that Greece and the Greek Cypriots give a positive response to the Turkish efforts. Bush might add that the US will also press for a solution in EU capitals. After the meeting, Bush might even call some European leaders to seek support for the Cyprus deal and for Turkey's EU accession. Washington's message for the EU is that providing Turkey an accession calendar will help efforts for a Cyprus solution."

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